

# bulletin



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**Jeff Wyatt**

VDOT's Ironman, Page 4

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## CONTRIBUTORS

Heidi Coy, Michelle Earl, Dawn Eischen,  
Tia Freeman, Robin Grier, Dan Horvath,  
David Kaulfers, P. E. , Sandy Myers,  
Vanloan Nguyen, Ann Overton, Mike Salmon

## STAFF

**Chief of Communications:** Jeffrey Caldwell

**Managing Editor:** Britt Drewes

**Graphics:** Wayne Minter, Robert Perry, Calvin Smith

**Photography:** Tom Saunders, Al Covey, Trevor  
Wrayton, Ed Deasy

Bulletin Editor  
1401 E. Broad Street  
Room 302  
Richmond, VA 23219  
(804) 786-4243 (TTY/TDD, call 711)  
Employeeenews@vdot.virginia.gov

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receiving the newsletter, please contact the editor  
using the information above.



**Commissioner Ekern**

## Commissioner's Column

### We heard you!

We can plan, build, maintain and operate an excellent transportation system, but we can't be a world-class transportation leader without ensuring you are well informed. Providing excellent internal communications is essential to our success.

Public Affairs staff met with more than 600 employees across the state last fall to ask what changes were needed to improve communications throughout every VDOT office. Your comments were outstanding, and they're the driving force behind major internal communications enhancements that you will see over the next few months.

The Bulletin, our employee newsletter for more than 70 years, is one major communications tool that you said must endure but should change. Specifically, you wanted the option of having the Bulletin in a printed format, and you wanted to learn of VDOT's success and

achievements shared from your colleagues' perspective. Well, we heard you – and starting with this edition of the Bulletin, you've got it.

We're taking the changes a step further. We know your workday is very busy. It is important that we make it easy and convenient for you to stay informed. With this issue, you'll receive you're a Bulletin at home by mail each month. Retirees and others interested in VDOT can also receive the Bulletin by mail. For those that enjoyed the electronic format, the Bulletin will still be available on [www.VirginiaDOT.org](http://www.VirginiaDOT.org).

I hope you will enjoy your new Bulletin. Let us know what you think by calling (804) 786-4243 or e-mailing [employeeenews@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:employeeenews@vdot.virginia.gov). We'll listen and respond.

*David S. Ekern*

# FEATURES



## Billy's Blog Connects VDOT With Community

When a community's facing months of torn-up roads and disruptions, informing residents eases the pain. **Billy Green**, Manassas senior construction manager, uses "Billy's Blog" to communicate with Upperville residents during a traffic-calming project along Route 50.

"It felt like we needed real-time interaction," Green said, noting the blog was also a sounding board for complaints. "It gives folks another information outlet," he said.

Upperville resident Anne Coyner kept up with the blog. "It served an absolute, terrific purpose to keep everyone in the loop," she said. Coyner relied on it in June when thousands attended the Upperville Horse Show.

The blog started as a chain of e-mails. Upperville is a small community, where construction news previously spread by word of mouth. Now, more than 300 people read the blog, which has moved to the project's page on [www.VirginiaDOT.org](http://www.VirginiaDOT.org). Green has expanded the target audience to all areas affected by the project, from Upperville to Aldie and Gilbert's Corner.

"It's a great tool if you're working in smaller communities," said Green. "My goal's not only to communicate, but also to make it personal," he said. Green worked with VDOT's information technology section to make the blog user-friendly. He also includes photos.

—Mike Salmon, Northern Virginia District



## Two in Chatham Receive Volunteer Honor

Public service definitely runs in the blood of Chatham Residency's **Edmund Giles** and **Doug Powell**. The two were recognized with the Chatham Volunteer Fire Department's 2007 Firefighters of the Year Award in December.

Giles serves as the residency's maintenance operations manager, and Powell is a crew member. The two were honored for exemplary service to the department, including fundraising efforts that led to the purchase of a new fire truck (pictured above).

Giles and Powell are not only VDOT colleagues; they are also brother-in-laws. Giles, who has put in 35 years with VDOT, has served the Chatham Fire Department for 27 years and also serves as its safety officer. His father started the local volunteer rescue squad, where his mother also served. Powell has served on the fire department for 21 years and also has the role of chaplain. He's been at VDOT since 2005. Both Giles' and Powell's wives and sons volunteer for the fire department, too.

"Our work at VDOT and the fire department have similarities," said Giles. "Both require us to respond to emergency situations and to work with the public. My work at the fire department has also helped how I communicate with the public."

Giles says the fire department, much like VDOT, is a close knit group, "We do our best to help one another."

—Paula Jones, Lynchburg District



## VTRC Researcher Studies Warm Mix Asphalt Benefits

Virginia Transportation Research Council (VTRC) scientist **Stacey Diefenderfer, P.E.**, who studies the environmentally friendly technology of warm mix asphalt, says a summer maintenance crew job at VDOT's Swoope AHQ led her to researching innovative pavements.

"I saw how good roads make a difference in people's everyday life," she said. She started studying asphalt at Virginia Tech, where she received bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering and where she's completing her doctorate.

Diefenderfer is overseeing tests of warm mix asphalt and evaluating its long-term performance and how VDOT can best use it.

Early tests have shown benefits, including reduced greenhouse gases, lower fuel costs, better working conditions, more durable pavements and longer paving seasons.

Regular mixes are produced from 280 to 325 degrees F. Additives that improve workability at lower temperatures can produce asphalt 50 to 75 degrees cooler. That means less energy consumption and fewer plant emissions. It can also be installed in cooler weather.

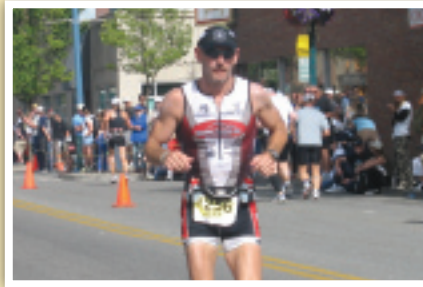
A study conducted by Diefenderfer and colleagues **Kevin McGhee** and **Bridget Donaldson** reported that a contractor hauling 320 tons of warm mix to a test site had a 30-degree drop in mix temperature with "no difference in workability."

—Ann Overton, VTRC

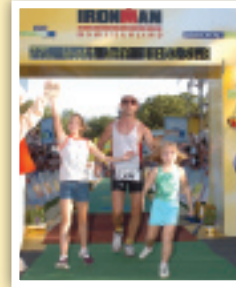
# EMPLOYEE NEWS

## JEFF WYATT: IRONMAN FINISHER

Jeff Wyatt gets his exercise- and we don't mean walking around the block.



**Left:** Jeff during the 2007 Ford Ironman Coeur d'Alene in Idaho.



**Right:** Jeff with his daughters Madeline and MacKenzie at the finish line of Ironman Switzerland.

**Jeff Wyatt** sure gets his exercise! Wyatt, a program manager in the Location and Design Division in Central Office, completed his first Ironman competition in summer 2006 at the Ironman Triathlon in Switzerland.

Last summer he finished the Ford Ironman Coeur d'Alene in Idaho. In each competition, Wyatt swam 2.4 miles, bicycled 112 mountainous miles and ran a full 26.2-mile marathon. His time for both competitions was approximately 11 hours and 54 minutes, despite breaking his toe in the Idaho swimming event and having to cycle and run with the pain.

It all began when Wyatt's wife, Denise, enrolled him in a fitness club a few years ago, then gave him a bike for Father's Day. He added swimming on his own.

"Denise is my biggest supporter," said Wyatt. "I train 18 hours a week, and, frankly, my success wouldn't be possible without her."

Wyatt trains about seven months before each Ironman competition. He lifts weights, swims and cycles – two or three times a week for each – and runs every chance he gets.

"This type of endeavor presents many challenges on race day, similar to a typical day in our CADD Support section at VDOT," said Wyatt. "As with training for an Ironman, you can try to prepare for everything imaginable, but something you didn't expect will surely pop up. It's taught me to overcome challenges and manage my time well. Both skills benefit my work at VDOT."

Wyatt manages the Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) Support group. The group

supports staff across the state with any issues that may arise when working in the electronic system. The support team takes as many as 7,000 calls per year requesting help.

This past summer, the Ironman event was especially meaningful for Wyatt. By completing it, he raised more than \$3,700 for a charity dear to him and Denise, the Virginia Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Alliance. They lost a son to SIDS in 1994. The Virginia SIDS Alliance ([www.vasids.org](http://www.vasids.org)) will use the money to advance research to prevent SIDS. The charity is also a Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign recipient.

There's more exercise in store for Wyatt; he's started training for another Ironman in South America in May. He'll be joined by his own cheering squad – Denise and his two daughters, Madeline, 12 and MacKenzie, 9.

## MEET TORRENCE ROBINSON, new Sandston Residency Administrator

As the new Sandston Residency administrator in the Richmond District, **Torrence Robinson** aims to maintain the good rapport VDOT has established in the community.

Robinson joined VDOT in October 2007. He previously served as the Richmond city traffic engineering operations manager.

"The Sandston Residency has a fantastic team of employees that work hard for the communities we serve," commented Robinson. "My goal is to give consistent leadership and support they

need so we can continue to provide these communities with exemplary service."

The residency covers New Kent, Charles City and Henrico counties – all located in Central Virginia. Currently, the residency is leading the I-295 Flyover and Barrett's Ferry Bridge projects.

In addition to his new role at VDOT, Robinson has another important role – he is father to two daughters Sydnii, 19, and Taylor, 17. He is also training to run the next Monument Avenue 10K.





# PROFESSIONAL NOTES

## RETIREMENTS

**Harry L. Anders**

Transportation Operator II  
Staunton, 30 years of service

**Judith A. Butler**

Admin and Office Spec II  
Bristol, 16 years of service

**Donald W. Carbury**

Engineering Technician III  
Salem, 40 years of service

**Walter E. Cruise**

Transportation Operator II  
Staunton, 30 years of service

**Minor H. Dodson**

Transportation Operator II  
Fredericksburg, 43 years of service

**Lillie H. Doggett**

Admin and Office Spec III  
Lynchburg, 31 years of service

**Aubrey L. Evans**

Equip Service Repair Tech I  
Staunton, 23 years of service

**Wayne D. Fitzgerald**

Architect/Engineer I  
Bristol, 23 years of service

**Phyllis C. Frazier**

Admin and Office Spec II  
Bristol, 38 years of service

**Ronald E. Frazier**

Transportation Operator II  
Staunton, 38 years of service

**Zane G. Fulk**

Transportation Operator II  
Hampton Roads, 35 years of service

**Mary E. Gaddy**

Admin and Office Spec III  
Bristol, 30 years of service

**William H. Gilmer**

Engineering Technician III  
Bristol, 34 years of service

**Junior H. Goad**

Gen Admin Manager II  
Staunton, 35 years of service

**Douglas W. Gordon**

Trades Technician III  
Hampton Roads, 34 years of service

**Douglas A. Greene**

Trades Technician III  
Lynchburg, 31 years of service

**William S. Heath**

Transportation Operator II  
Salem, 31 years of service

**Lawrence G. Hill**

Transportation Operator II  
Salem, 34 years of service

**Michael W. Hodges**

Transportation Operator II  
Fredericksburg, 19 years of service

**George E. Hunter**

Transportation Operator II  
Staunton, 24 years of service

**Benny S. Jones**

Transportation Operator II  
Salem, 18 years of service

**William R. Jones**

Transportation Operator II  
Salem, 30 years of service

**Edwin V. Litchford**

Transportation Operator II  
Hampton Roads, 16 years of service

**Will T. Lynch**

Transportation Operator II  
Fredericksburg, 16 years of service

**Martha L. Mason**

Engineering Technician III  
Bristol, 20 years of service

**Delmer R. McKnight**

Transportation Operator II  
Lynchburg, 7 years of service

**Grahame E. McLaughlin**

Equip Service Repair Tech I  
Bristol, 33 years of service

**Elizabeth C. Olinger**

Admin and Office Spec II  
Hampton Roads, 45 years of service

**Ross D. Pierce, Jr.**

Engineering Technician III  
Staunton, 29 years of service

**Donald R. Pittington**

Transport Ops Manager II  
Fredericksburg, 42 years of service

**Lawrence A. Prince**

Transportation Operator II  
Fredericksburg, 15 years of service

**Dennis K. Scott, Jr**

Engineering Technician III  
Staunton, 29 years of service

**Marvin H. Scott, Sr**

Transportation Operator II  
Salem, 25 years of service

**Jack D. Smith**

Transport Ops Manager II  
Fredericksburg, 33 years of service

**Archie S. Stevens**

Transportation Operator II  
Hampton Roads, 40 years of service

**James E. Stovall**

Security Officer III  
Salem, 21 years of service

**Thomas D. Stroupe**

Transportation Operator II  
Northern Virginia, 7 years of service

**Timothy F. Stuart**

Transportation Operator II  
Salem, 31 years of service

**Kenneth W. Taylor**

Transportation Operator II  
Richmond, 30 years of service

**G. H. Thompson**

Engineering Technician III  
Lynchburg, 40 years of service

**William A. Tolbert**

Transportation Operator II  
Hampton Roads, 34 years of service

**Floyd L. Walker**

Transportation Operator II  
Staunton, 26 years of service

**Carl P. Wilhelm**

Engineering Technician IV  
Hampton Roads, 43 years of service

**George D. Williams, Jr.**

Engineering Technician III  
Hampton Roads, 42 years of service

**Oliver W. Williams**

Lnd Acq and Prop Mgmt Manager II  
Salem, 41 years of service

**Arnold B. Woodford**

Transportation Operator II  
Hampton Roads, 30 years of service

## OBITUARIES

**Nancy Robson**

66, Admin and Office Spec,  
Culpeper District,  
30 years of service.

**Joseph A. Runk**

65, Info Technology Manager I,  
Salem District,  
16 years of service.

**Samuel M. Rubbie**

61, Office Services Supervisor,  
Salem District,  
15 years of service.

## CAREER MOVES / PROFESSIONAL NOTES

**M. Laverne Branch**

named procurement review analyst  
for Administrative Services,  
Central Office

**Britt Drewes**

named assistant director for  
Public Affairs, Central Office

**Adam Loan**

named security technician,  
Salem District

**Michael Russell**

named assistant district engineer  
for preliminary engineering

**Alex Owsiak**

geotechnical engineer,  
Fredericksburg District, passed  
the professional engineer's exam

**Jay Patel**

transportation engineering,  
Hampton Roads District, passed the  
professional engineer's exam

**Joan Spangler**

human resources analyst,  
Fredericksburg District, received her  
certification in sign language

## Around the State



### CULPEPER DISTRICT

**Wayne Hill** and **Richard Eppard**, both transportation operators at Stanardsville area AHQ, are constantly looking for ways to improve safety as they go about their jobs. Concerned about the lack of “anything to hang on to” when loading water or calcium chloride into a tank truck, they used scrap metal from the equipment shop to fabricate a special ladder. The removable device features steps with no-slip grip, rails and an extension designed to fit the shape of the tank. “They realized that (loading the tanks) was an accident waiting to happen,” reports Stanardsville Superintendent **Jeff Garr**. “So — as they’ve done before — they got their heads together and came up with an idea to make the operation safer.”



### TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY PLANNING DIVISION

More than 60 employees representing 18 divisions attended the Transportation and Mobility Planning Division Open House recently. The event was created to help support communication and coordination with other VDOT divisions. Program information and maps depicting VDOT’s transportation planning priorities and on-going efforts were displayed, including the 2035 state highway plan development, Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS), bicycle and pedestrian planning, freight planning and the freight study, value pricing pilot program, the National Highway System and more.



### RICHMOND DISTRICT

VDOT has returned a 1,000-foot stretch of Stony Run Creek under I-95 in Hanover County to a more natural state. The stream restoration project mitigates stream impacts from the Route 30 widening project. During storm events, the creek often had backflow from the Chickahominy River. One feature of this project included installing rock vein structures along the bank of the creek to prevent erosion and deflect water flow into the main culvert under the highway. “It takes a lot of patience to get the stones just right,” said **Dave Fry**, VDOT environmental engineer. “It’s like putting a puzzle together.”

### STAUNTON DISTRICT

Staunton District was recently honored with the annual Tree-Trimming Award from Scenic Virginia. The district was commended for educating local citizen groups and local governments about roadside work before it occurred and following up with them after the work was complete. Last year, staff kept communications going as they selectively removed many trees in the “clear zone” along Interstates 64, 66, and 81 in seven counties. They created an unobstructed, flat area that allows an errant vehicle leaving the roadway to recover, but retained the beautiful viewshed. The district will plant new trees out of the clear zone this year.

### TRAFFIC ENGINEERING DIVISION

Currently VDOT maintains approximately 2600 traffic signal intersections. In 1999, VDOT realized the significant cost savings of light-emitting diode (LED) technology and began implementing red and green LED modules retrofit. As of 2005, we launched full LED implementation for all new signal installations on state-maintained roadways. The Traffic Engineering Division is working with regions to retrofit all eligible (now includes yellow) traffic signal structures with the energy-saving LED modules. The division is also looking at using LED technology in other assets, including white LEDs for roadway lighting.

### LYNCHBURG DISTRICT

Who says you can’t go home again? Well, it isn’t true when you are a VDOTer — just ask **Kenneth Martin**, new transportation operations manager III at the Halifax Residency. Martin retired earlier this year as Volens AHQ superintendent after 30 years of state service. He also held an exemplary safety record of 30 years without a personal injury or equipment accident. “At the time, (retiring) was the right thing to do,” said Martin. “Now, this is the right thing for me and, I hope, the Halifax Residency and area citizens. I am looking forward to continuing what I began over 30 years ago — my career with VDOT.”

# Around the State

## MATERIALS DIVISION

VDOT Materials Division staff, led by **Mourad Bouhajja, Debra Casper** and **Todd Rorrer**, recently developed and hosted an Asphalt Plant Certification School at an actual asphalt plant. Plant operators, quality control professionals and inspectors attended the training to learn more about the production and delivery of asphalt and key components to a success program. Ultimately, the knowledge shared results in more effective and quality product – from the plant to the road.

## SALEM DISTRICT

The Salem District recently hired U.S. Army Veteran **Adam Loan** through the Wounded Veteran Internship Program. As a security technician with the Salem District Security Management section, Loan is putting his military experience to good use. "It's a lot of responsibility, but I enjoy it. There are 36 locations, and we are responsible for making sure their emergency plans are comprehensive and up to date," said Loan. Just six weeks before starting the intern program, Loan and his wife welcomed their daughter Madison Faith into the world.

## BRISTOL DISTRICT

VDOT has implemented two new efforts to keep motorists traveling through Interstate 77's Big Walker Mountain and East River Mountain tunnel restoration projects informed and safe. A new toll-free phone number, 1-866-7-TUNNEL gives real-time information on traffic conditions through the tunnel work zones. Also, the Safety Service Patrol has set up patrols along I-77 between Exits 24 and 58 and I-81 between Exits 70 and 86. The Safety Service Patrol is now available to motorists from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m. daily.

## LOCATION AND DESIGN DIVISION

Gov. Tim Kaine has appointed **Sherry Munford**, public involvement specialist, to the Virginia Council on Indians. The council is made up of 11 members and is tasked with studying the historic dealings and relationships between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Virginia Indian Tribes. Munford is a member of the Sappony Tribe.

## NORTHERN VIRGINIA DISTRICT

Residents of Upperville, in Virginia's horse country, are the first to enjoy the Route 50 Traffic Calming initiatives, as VDOT finished construction through the community in early December. The charming village now has landscaping, on-street parking, curbs, gutters, a closed drainage system and raised brick sidewalks. Two more projects are slated for Route 50 in Loudoun County, known its rolling pastures and horse farms. The area includes Gilberts Corner and the village of Aldie.

## RESEARCH COUNCIL

**Cheryl Lynn** and **Jami Kennedy** presented results of certain analyses of fatal motorcycle crashes to the Governor's Motorcycle Advisory Council. Virginia motorcycle fatalities have risen from 70 in 2006 to 121 as of Nov. 30, 2007. The Research Council is providing technical assistance on a project combining VDOT's crash file with Trauma Registry data to identify characteristics of serious motorcycle crashes that might lead to safety countermeasures.

## HAMPTON ROADS DISTRICT

Hampton Roads has introduced a new initiative – Unity Friday. Since last August, district employees have celebrated VDOT unity and pride by wearing their VDOT attire on the last Friday of month. At another recent event, the district honored **Charles "Mac" Clarke** for 55 years of service. Clarke, the district's maintenance engineer, has worked at VDOT longer than any other current employee in the state. Rumor has it that he has no plans to retire soon.

## FREDERICKSBURG DISTRICT

The Lord Delaware Bridge Replacement Project on Route 33 in West Point was selected by the National Partnership for Highway Quality (NPHQ) as the 2007 State Winner in its National Achievement Award program. NPHQ Executive Director Bob Templeton noted in a national press release that VDOT addressed a number of environmental challenges with the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including time-of-year restrictions for working in water, tidal influences and a soft subsurface, as it worked to relieve major traffic bottlenecks for rail, river barge and vehicular traffic traveling between I-64 and Route 17.

## STRUCTURES AND BRIDGES DIVISION

I-95/I-395/I-495 Springfield Interchange and the project contractor, HNTB Corporation, have won the Grand Award for the 2007-2008 American Council of Engineering Companies of Metropolitan Washington's Engineering Excellence Awards. Judges commented that they were impressed with "the solutions that were reached to counter site constraints, the multiple innovative processes and design, and the project team's work ethic and ingenuity." The project will now compete at the national level.

## THE INBOX

### Memorial Scholarship Deadline Feb. 29

The American Road and Transportation Builders Association is accepting applications for the 2008 Highway Worker Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship provides financial assistance for post-high school education to children of highway construction workers killed or permanently disabled on the job. The scholarship provides up to \$2,000 per student.

For eligibility requirements and applications, visit [www.ARTBA.org](http://www.ARTBA.org) or contact Rhonda Britton at 202-289-4434. Completed applications must be postmarked by **February 29, 2008**.

### VDOT Raises \$300,324 in Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign

District	2007 CVC Total
Bristol	\$ 9,631
Central Office	\$ 103,221
Culpeper	\$ 20,669
Fredericksburg	\$ 26,656
Hampton Roads	\$ 49,938
Lynchburg	\$ 8,467
Northern Virginia	\$ 24,939
Richmond	\$ 35,527
Salem	\$ 10,790
Staunton	\$ 10,486